



# The ISC Newsletter

International Society of Cryptozoology

Fall 1983  
Vol. 2, No. 3

Editor  
J. Richard Greenwell

The ISC Newsletter is an official publication of the International Society of Cryptozoology, and is published for Society members and Institutional subscribers. Membership is \$25 annually; Institutional subscriptions are \$35. Membership and subscription inquiries and correspondence should be addressed to ISC, Box 43070, Tucson, AZ 85733, USA; (602) 884-8369.

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Society of Cryptozoology

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ISSN 0741-5362

## Interview

FROM NESSIE TO MOKELE MBEMBE --

A LEADING CRYPTOZOOLOGIST DISCUSSES HIS THOUGHTS AND FINDINGS



photo by S. Alan Haines

Roy P. Mackal

Roy P. Mackal has spent almost his entire academic life at The University of Chicago, where he graduated with a B.A. in 1949 and a Ph.D. in 1953. Since that time, he has been a Research Associate at the levels of Instructor, Assistant Professor, and Associate Professor in the Department of Biochemistry (1953-1973). He became affiliated with the Department of Biology in 1973, where he is now an Associate in Biology.

Dr. Mackal's biochemical research has included the demonstration of transfer T7 DNA phosphorus from parent to progeny (1954), the identification of a variety of nucleotides in

the acid-soluble fraction of infected *E. coli* (1956), and the demonstration of recombination and complementation in frozen thawed cell preparations when appropriate DNA preparations were added (1969-1971). Among his other discoveries, he was the first to successfully isolate infectious double-stranded bacteriophage DNA and infect speroplasts in a hyponic environment (1961).

As an engineer, Dr. Mackal has also developed numerous technological innovations, including the design and construction of automatic parachute and recovery systems for sounding rockets, a hydrogen-generation device for weather balloons, and a device for exercising human eyeballs after eye muscle surgery using an automobile windshield wiper motor.

Between 1965 and 1975, Dr. Mackal served as Scientific Director of the now-defunct Loch Ness Phenomena Investigation Bureau, and is the author of *The Monster of Loch Ness* (Swallow Press, 1976), and *Searching for Hidden Animals* (Doubleday, 1980). He has led two expeditions to the Congo in search of Mokele-Mbembe in 1980 and 1981, and is currently writing a book on the topic.

Dr. Mackal serves as Vice President of ISC, but the opinions he expresses below are his own and do not reflect any position or policy established by the Society. He was interviewed by Newsletter Editor J. Richard Greenwell.

## Honorary Members:

Andre Capart (Belgium); Marjorie Courtenay-Latimer (South Africa); David James (United Kingdom); Marie-Jeanne Koffmann (Soviet Union); Ingo Krumbiegel (West Germany); Theodore Monod (France); John R. Napier (United Kingdom); and Sir Peter Scott (United Kingdom).



Greenwell: Roy, I suppose it was the Loch Ness business that first got you involved with cryptozoology. Over the years, you have changed your opinion as to what the reported animals in Loch Ness might be, from large eels to giant amphibians to primitive whales. Do you feel there is sufficient evidence to warrant any categorizations of this kind, to be able to say what sort of animal we are really dealing with?

Mackal: I think that regardless of what kind of evidence we have, and how good it is, we need to make working hypotheses along the way to guide us in research, experimental procedures, and in general to organize our thinking as to what kinds of phenomena might be involved. I started out asking the question whether there were animals involved at all. That is, whether we were dealing with some sort of geophysical phenomena resulting in the release of gas bubbles, or whether we were dealing with some kind of biological or zoological phenomena; by that I mean plants or animals, but of known species seen under unusual circumstances. So, along the way, I became gradually convinced that the most simple explanation of all the data was that there is a small group of animals involved. And my ideas as to what those animals are have changed as evidence accumulated and as it was reinterpreted. The kinds of animals I considered in the beginning were invertebrates, large sorts of snails, if you will, but aquatic forms, sea slugs, but adapted to fresh water, which is an extremely improbable hypothesis. As we obtained more data, each of my hypotheses seemed to have more merit in terms of scientific validity, and I now think that my last working hypothesis has a greater probability of turning out to be correct, or at least partially correct.

Greenwell: Which is the primitive whale?

Mackal: Yes. It is important to consider what kinds of animals might function at levels that we can now document based on underwater sonar tracking; that is, diving rates, the ability to move at 10 or 12 knots at the surface in temperatures only slightly above freezing, and so forth. To be able to dive at certain rates, changing depth, does limit the kinds of animals which might be involved. For example, fish with closed swim bladders could not possibly change depth at the rates we established by sonar tracking. The other thing is vertical flexure. This is based on anecdotal evidence, but runs throughout all the observations: the animals reportedly undulate from top to bottom rather than from left to right. That is very problematical for the eel hypothesis. We could go over 30 or 40 such characteristics.

Greenwell: One of the things that some mammals can do quite well is dive. The Weddell seal has complete lung collapse, doesn't it, which allows it to dive deeply, quickly?

Mackal: We have some good diving profiles made with the cooperation of people at the University of Birmingham. That was some of the earliest work that we did, and I've plotted the diving profiles of five of those objects in the loch and compared them, superimposed them, on a diving profile for the Weddell seal, and the shapes are very similar, although the maximum and minimum excursions are not as great because the depth of the loch limits the depth to which animals can dive.

Greenwell: Now, you also think the animals are mobile, that they enter and leave Loch Ness, and other lakes where such animals are reported, rather than being ecologically restricted to these freshwater environments. What about situations where such transits are simply not possible, such as at Loch Morar,

where the river actually falls over a small hydroelectric waterfall? There would be simply no way for large animals to get in and out there unobserved. And yet there are good sightings at Morar. How does that relate to your transit hypothesis?

Mackal: There are two possibilities here, both of which may actually occur. The first situation would be a small group of animals landlocked in this way. Perhaps these animals entered such an area when the region and the lake were not landlocked, and have now adapted there with a sufficient food source. That could occur perhaps in Loch Morar. The other possibility is that the animals, on the basis of some of the evidence, are able to move certain distances overland, and this accounts for the fact that we can find them in places like Morar, or at our other places, like Lake Pohengamook in Canada, where a road cuts off the lake from the sea. But, in general, every area for which we have reports between 40 and 60 degrees north latitude, whether it's in a river or a lake, there is a connection to the sea and involves migratory fish. So we have two situations. In one, the animals may actually move over land for distances of up to 20 miles, or at least in wet riverbeds that perhaps are too shallow for actual swimming. In the other situation, it may be that they entered an area when it was accessible, and if it was a large body of water and the food supply indigenous to it was sufficient to maintain the population, it could have stayed and become landlocked. This has happened in other instances. We have examples in the case of pinnipeds, and we have examples in the case of sirenians and even sharks.

Greenwell: So you think there are the in-and-out transits in some lakes, and those actually restricted in other lakes?



Mackal: Yes, but even in the lakes that are not restricted, if the volume of water is very large, in Loch Ness for example--

Greenwell: --Or Lake Champlain.

Mackal: --Or Lake Champlain, they may find a food supply which is very large, and a large living space. They may well remain for more than one season, regardless of whether or not they can get in or out.

Greenwell: Do you still think that it's possible that one of these supposed lake animals could be trapped? In your book, you had a design for a large trap. Do you still think that's a viable approach?

Mackal: Well, since I wrote that section in my book on trapping an animal in a large lake such as Loch Ness, which is a very difficult and improbable situation, I've done further research, and we have more information. I've more recently suggested a much more practical approach in terms of time and money and probability of success. I found that people living along rivers, specifically along the Columbia River and along the Skeena River in British Columbia, once they determined that we were serious, that we were interested in what they had seen and we were not ready to write silly stories and make jokes about their imbibing too much alcoholic beverage and seeing things, I found that there's an undercurrent of observation present. That is, people who have lived along these rivers for many years, 20, 30, 40 years, have at one time or another observed one of these animals moving upstream behind salmon migrations.

The salmon migrate up the Columbia River, they migrate up the Skeena River, and I'm suggesting that we ought to enlist the help of people living in the area, to contact us when they

observe such an animal. And it doesn't mean that we have to be ready at all times of the year. We know when the salmon migrate up these rivers. They just appear in a few weeks, over a period of a week sometimes, when the females are going upstream to spawn. They could notify a team that is at the ready with equipment, appropriate nets, with openings large enough to permit salmon and other fish to pass through so we would not get into trouble with fisheries commissions, either U.S. or Canadian, and in a few hours by air we could be at the site. We could go upstream ahead of the salmon migration, and get the nets strung across the river. This is a doable project. The river is not nearly as wide as Loch Ness, Lake Champlain or Pohangamook. Go downstream, deploy a second net to where the object was first observed and slowly move the two nets toward each other.

Eventually, then, we ought to have an animal in a net with the salmon passing through it. It sounds easy but there would be many difficulties. Nevertheless, I think that's the right approach. Certainly, the only satisfactory solution to a cryptozoological problem is the animal, as a carcass, in a tank alive, or in a zoo or museum.

Greenwell: I think there would be quite a few logistical problems in such a project, such as having the witnesses being able to communicate with you instantly. You'd need some sort of relay method, and you've got to be ready to go with the nets, and maybe helicopters. It would require quite a bit of financing and organization. It can't be done on a shoestring.

Mackal: That's right, that's why, although I suggested it quite some years ago, it hasn't been done yet. We wouldn't need helicopters, but we would need nets; we wouldn't need nets a mile long and 700 feet across, however. People could communi-

cate by telephone, certainly from along the Columbia River.

Greenwell: Now, when it comes to Loch Ness and other similar lakes, you seem to have a more conservative viewpoint, that we might be dealing with large eels, or supposedly extinct mammals. But certainly not Mesozoic reptiles, such as plesiosaurs. But when looking at Mokele Mbembe reports in Central Africa, you seem much more willing to accept the idea of the persistence of a Mesozoic reptile up to the present. Why is that in one case and not the other?

Mackal: All the working hypotheses that I have entertained with regard to Loch Ness have absolutely nothing to do with whether or not they were conservative or not. One can define "conservative" any way one wants, and different people define it in different ways. If you define "conservative" as meaning that you accept with greater ease the present existence of some animal which, based on the fossil record, became extinct more recently as compared to an animal which supposedly became extinct a long time ago, if that's what you mean, that does not apply in the case of Loch Ness. For example, my hypothesis, that an amphibian of some kind was involved, such as Eogyrinus, is far more spectacular and less conservative than a Mesozoic reptile, because the amphibians were in their heyday prior to the period when Mesozoic reptiles were dominating the scene. My judgment as to what kinds of animals may explain the data of Loch Ness has always been based on the evidence as it accumulated. That is, the characteristics derived from, in some cases, purely descriptive material. And that was always the basis for my hypotheses. It had nothing to do with whether or not they would be conservative explanations.

Greenwell: And the same would hold true for the Congo?

Mackal: The same would hold true for the Congo. I personally am prepared to entertain the possibility that we have a large lizard, a monitor lizard of some kind. But on the other hand that does not explain the data as well as a small sauropod.

Greenwell: Well, you've been to the Congo on two expeditions, and of course I was with you on one of them, on the second one. Are you convinced that we're actually dealing with an unknown animal there, possibly a sauropod? Are you convinced now there's something there?

Mackal: I don't like the word convinced. I think that the probabilities are quite good that we're dealing with real animals rather than some myth. What impresses me is when you can obtain descriptive detail from over 30 individuals of different ethnic, religious, cultural, and geographic backgrounds describing the same thing; that suggests to me an objective basis for it. If we're going to have a cultural or a religious construction, I would expect it to be present in say, the Bomatabas, but not in a pygmy group, which is culturally distinct. There might be some overlap, but not in the sense that we found it. Now, I think my greater concern here is that these people are referring to their experiences with real animals. The question is whether there are any of them left, or whether a tradition about them is being repeated to us in great detail as a personal experience, meaning that we could have gotten there too late.

Greenwell: If such animals have remained almost unobserved out there in the swamps all this time, we might keep getting reports. But couldn't this situation just go on and on indefinitely?

Mackal: Well, I think that's right. As you yourself know, the swamps are vast and practically impenetrable, and if the animals are in equilibrium, and if they've made it there for at least 65 million years--assuming they are sauropods--it seems rather absurd to suggest that, in the absence of any major environmental changes and interference by man, they should suddenly disappear.

Greenwell: Or that we should suddenly find them?

Mackal: Or that we should suddenly find them.

Greenwell: So it's a situation that might be unresolved for a long, long time.

Mackal: If nobody does anything about it, nothing's going to happen.

Greenwell: Moving on to other areas, what other cryptozoological problems would you like to tackle, and in what parts of the world? Do you have a sort of an overview of the global scene?

Mackal: The thing that influences me most in my own personal choices is anecdotal information which is "hot," and by that I mean information which is coming to me from individuals who are having current experiences. That is, if somebody says "last week I saw so-and-so in such-and-such a place, I would like to take you there," that is the kind of anecdotal evidence that interests me. We've got a number of such areas right now. One is around a small island off the west coast of Alaska, where there's a tradition of an unidentified aquatic animal. These people are Eskimos. From the descriptions that I've got, it suggests a mammal of some kind. These people know the orca, they know pinnipeds, they know the other kinds of animals that live in the area. This appears to be something different. Right now, there are some Coast

Guard personnel stationed only 30 or 40 kilometers from the island, and from them I have reports that these animals are present in the area, although not in great abundance, that they are feared by the Eskimos, and that they have attached to them some mythical and rather religious connotations. In fact, I have a recent report that a friend of one of the Eskimo acquaintances of this individual had his wife or girlfriend killed by one of the animals overturning one of their skin boats.

Greenwell: What about other parts of the world?

Mackal: Well, another place that interests me is the northern India border, between India and China. In 1947, this area was first explored by von Hamedorf. This is another place that is like a sort of "lost world." One tribe describes an animal called the buru, which is probably a large lizard. By large, I mean 3 to 5 meters in length. And there's very specific data. The individual who contacted me first with this data has died within the last 10 years, and so, even though he made two expeditions into the area, he cannot now take anyone. But we have specific data as to coordinates, and data as to where exactly these animals have been observed. I think that's a lead we might follow up. Furthermore, even if the animals became extinct recently, there are specific places where the animals have been killed in the last 20 or 30 years and we should be able to find green bone material. While that would not be as exciting as a living animal, it would still be a payoff in terms of the expense and time and effort involved in such an expedition.

Greenwell: And of course you're still interested in going back to Africa. There are a number of supposed animals there that you'd like to pursue.



Mackal: Well, the African situation became more complicated when we found out that the term Mokele Mbembe is generic on the one hand and specific on the other. There are reports of four or five other unidentified animals, one of which we've been able to identify with a known form, and that gives us some idea, some judgment as to what the descriptive correspondence of these people is as compared to what the real animal is like. Now, whether or not any of these still exist and are present, I think it's still worthwhile pursuing. I think, however, that the matter ought to be pursued in a different way. We have, at great time, expense, and danger, exposed ourselves looking for needles in haystacks. As you know, we motivated the Ministry of Water and Forests in the Congolese government to become interested. They are on the scene and they could station people to investigate these areas, to localize the presence of one of these animals. If they need help, they can call on us, and within five days we can be there with equipment and help out in terms of bringing an animal into an isolated situation to be observed and photographed and studied. That's the procedure that is now being followed.

Greenwell: You've been very visible as a sort of spokesman for cryptozoology in this country. Has this caused you any professional problems? Do you sometimes get criticized by other scientists for this, and how do you handle this sort of thing personally?

Mackal: In any situation there are always people who criticize what you do and you have to expect that. If you're doing anything of interest, that's the normal situation. In the case where one is involved in controversial areas for whatever reason, this tends to become more polemical, it tends to become emotional, even though there is no real basis for it. Crypto-

zoology does not suggest a challenge to any established scientific principles. I can certainly say that I've had difficulties, more or less, over the years, but I would have had difficulties, more or less, over the years whether or not I had been involved in cryptozoology.

Greenwell: But that's just because you're a "troublemaker" anyway, aren't you?

Mackal: Well, I've always been told in terms of research to go and do what I wanted, to follow my own intuition. Maybe that's not scientific, but I can recall, in setting up my experiments during my 20 years as a biochemist, that I had a standard routine of talking to a good friend and colleague, and telling him about the experiments I was planning. And he was very sharp, and he would always come up with plenty of reasons why these experiments were a waste of time, why they should not be done. And the ones which he objected to most vehemently were the ones I insisted on doing. And, in fact, those produced the best scientific pay-offs!

Greenwell: So how would you respond to persons who say, well, this whole cryptozoology business is nonsense and a waste of time. How would you answer such criticism?

Mackal: I would say that our philosophy is that there should be no area of human experience that reasonable men and women should not investigate if they are so inclined. Such a critic has a perfect right to his judgment and opinion, but he should also stay out of my way, he should simply remain neutral in terms of permitting me to do what I believe, in my judgment, to be a profitable and fun kind of investigation. I want to emphasize that cryptozoology has nothing to do with the goblin world. That is, we're talking about the investigation of re-

ports of the possible existence of perfectly normal animals, unusual perhaps in size or shape, or in behavior, perhaps more elusive than others. In general, if we have any kind of absolute criteria which we follow, we do not entertain all sorts of paranormal explanations, or explanations which involve ideas not established in science at the present time. That doesn't mean that such things cannot exist, but certainly in cryptozoology there's no need to move in that direction.

Greenwell: Do you think the creation of the Society has had a positive effect on all of this, in that it's drawn more scientists together who are interested in these problems? It's not just individuals out there now, sort of renegade scientists, working on their own.

Mackal: Since I have almost a 20-year perspective, I can see a positive effect on the scientific community, on the general public, and on the media, and that the idea of what cryptozoology is, the kinds of things we're doing, is an acceptable activity, not something that you can class with witchcraft, astrology, and some of these other fringe kinds of activities.

Greenwell: So cryptozoology is becoming an area one can pursue without having to hide in the closet, so to speak?

Mackal: It's much easier to do now than in 1965. If people are considering becoming involved in this activity, I still think that, if they have professional careers in any of the allied sciences in mind, the best thing is to first finish academic training and obtain a professional position before making a large commitment to cryptozoology. It's just a matter of caution. □

## Message from the Editor

The Editor must apologize for the delay in mailing the summer, 1983, issue of the *Newsletter*. Following several other kinds of delays, floods hit Tucson in late September, which resulted in the loss of the newsletter's paper stock by the printer; it had to be replenished by a new shipment from Minnesota. After the printing, it was found that all of the address cards used for producing the mailing labels had become irreparably warped in the extremely high humidity caused by the floods, which resulted in all the membership records having to be entered into a new computerized system. This will, however, prevent similar problems in the future.

The membership records are now supposedly in order. However, it is possible that some errors have crept into the system, or that a few members may have been "lost" completely. The Editor requests the understanding and patience of the membership with these problems resulting from a theoretical "100-year flood." Please notify the Editor immediately if any membership errors arise.

This issue of the *Newsletter* contains further changes and improvements. First, the new column *News and Notes* will relay to members interesting items that are too brief for separate, individual articles. Members are urged to send such brief news items to the Editor for possible inclusion in the column. The cartoon has been terminated, and a new column, *Wood's Animal Facts*, has been added. The letter will regularly abstract from a book by Gerald Wood, which was briefly described in the bibliography appearing in the last (Summer, 1983) *Newsletter*. This issue also includes a lengthy interview with Roy Mackal, who was one of the prime movers behind the founding of the Society. Other *Newsletter* changes and improvements are being planned.

Abusive letters continue to come in to the Editor from some Bigfoot researchers. It is the Editor's policy to publish letters reflecting all viewpoints, but it is also his hope that, in the course of time, such individuals will submit more productive manuscripts for publication, particularly in the jour-

nal. Some advisers within the Bigfoot community have informed the Editor that the Society is perceived by some of them as some sort of threat or "competition" to their own structures and activities, and that the Editor has ignored or diminished their role in Sasquatch work. The Editor, who also serves as Secretary to the Society, can state that it is not the purpose of the Society to compete with anyone; rather, the Society is intended to serve as a forum for all groups to participate in, exchanging views and publishing their information.

The Editor can only publish what is made available to him. If certain groups wish to remain apart, and only send in abusive communications, then that is all the Editor can publish. The Editor wishes to renew his invitation to all individuals and groups: the pages of the *Newsletter* and journal are open to them, provided, of course, that their submissions are well-researched, documented, and in the appropriate format.

J. Richard Greenwell  
Editor

## Stop Press

At press time, the Editor has received details of a new observation of Mokele Mbembe, the supposed dinosaur of the Likouala swamps of the northern Congo Republic. The observation was made by the leader of a new Congolese government expedition, who is a trained biologist. Full details will appear in the Winter *Newsletter*, and a Field Report is expected for the journal.

## Notice to Non-U.S. Members

Due to problems related to the autumn flood in Tucson, only 65 of the 115 non-U.S. members were mailed the summer *Newsletter* (Vol. 2, No. 2), and the record as to which 65 they were was lost. As it was impossible to determine which 50 members had not received the *Newsletter*, a new mailing was made to all non-U.S. members, which inevitably resulted in 65 persons receiving the summer newsletter twice. Such members are requested to either return their

duplicate copies to ISC, or to pass them on to acquaintances interested in cryptozoology who may then decide to join the Society. Another possibility is to donate the extra newsletters to public and academic libraries, some of which may decide to open institutional subscriptions.



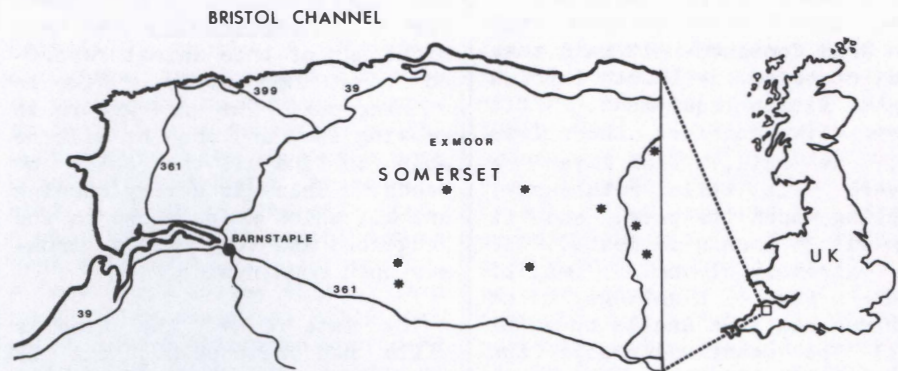


## The Beast of Exmoor

From time to time, reports of "pumas" have come from rural communities in the United Kingdom. For decades, there have been reports of a "Surrey puma." There have been other sightings in England, and a rash of them in Wales.

The latest excitement, which involved the participation of Britain's elite Royal Marines, has been over the "Beast of Exmoor." Exmoor is a usually peaceful area of southwestern England, on the Bristol Channel, which has been experiencing a rash of farm animal killings and sightings of the "Beast" since early spring. It is thought by some to be a puma and by others to be a wild dog. (The only surviving native canid in the United Kingdom is the fairly common fox, *Vulpes vulpes crucigera*, and the only surviving felid is the wild cat, *Felis silvestris grampia*, found only in rugged parts of northern England and Scotland.)

After the attacks began in Devon, the police called in the Royal Marines. Complete with camouflage clothing and headgear, and special night-vision rifles, the Marines hid out at night in early May as part of "Operation Beastie." Police Superintendent Douglas McClary expressed concern over the killings, and the British press provided continual updates on the happenings. On May 7, London's *Daily Express* offered a £1,000 (sterling) reward for the first clear photograph of the Beast. The police immediately reacted negatively to the reward offer, and asked photographers to stay away. Following consultations between the police and the Royal Marines, it was decided to withdraw the commandos who had been posted in hideouts on the tops of hills. "Public safety has been of paramount importance throughout this operation, and we feel this reward



*The haunt of the "Beast of Exmoor." Stars indicate locations where the "Beast" has struck, killing about 100 farm animals.*

may attract people to the area," stated Superintendent McClary. A Royal Marine spokesman called the *Express* reward "grossly irresponsible."

The Beast, which was first thought to be a puma, was by now being described as a large black dog by some witnesses. John Franks, a school bus driver, described it as having "a gleaming black coat and short powerful legs...the head just didn't fit on the body...it didn't seem to have a neck, just this squat head." Other witnesses also thought it looked like an enormous black dog, and the marines, who spotted it during their stakeouts, described it as "a black and powerful animal." Speculation ran high as to what kind of dog it might be, and why it had suddenly taken to killing farm animals. Others still believed it was a black panther, and some veterinarians had even reportedly confirmed that the farm animals had been killed in a typical "big cat" fashion, with the neck broken at the second vertebrae. Most of the stock killed were sheep and lambs, half of them belonging to farmer Eric Ley, of Drewstone. One farmer, Denys Smaldon, said "It kills and eats lambs like no dog or fox ever did. It pulls wool away and attacks the shoulder and rump...it leaves the

bone structure of the neck like you would leave a fishbone in a restaurant."

The Beast struck again at Ley's farm right after the commandos pulled out, and Ley also criticized the *Express*, stating that "while the Marines were here, the animal did not attack once." Some reports indicated that "scores of people" with cameras were roaming Exmoor after the Marine withdrawal, hoping for a chance photo, but the *Express*, in its May 9 issue, stated that such fears "seemed exaggerated and there were no reports of any invasion by sightseers." In a separate editorial, the *Express* defended its reward offer, stating that criticism of it was "an orchestrated storm in a teacup." It stated that Superintendent McClary had first been consulted, and that he had said that he "saw nothing against a reward." The *Express* also stated that it had advised photographers looking for the Beast not to operate at night because of the Royal Marine operations, and not to trespass on private farmlands.

That night, local farmers organized their own armed posse, without results. As the *Express* reward went uncollected, and public interest diminished, the Marines returned. By early

June, both the police and the Marines were convinced that the Beast was a "large, wild dog of some sort." One officer from the 42nd Commando Unit said they had observed the Beast through night vision equipment. "It moves like soldiers themselves do," he said, "from cover to cover. It kills ruthlessly, ripping open its prey, and it can eat 35 pounds of meat... It is extremely clever." Despite their night sightings, the Marines had been unable to shoot it. The Beast was always too close to farmhouses, or was moving too fast, to allow a clear shot. The Marines, dispatched from Plymouth and from the Commando Training Centre at Lympstone, were based at Eric Ley's farm. "It's just a matter of time," one officer said.

But time went by, and the Beast continued to evade its pursuers, some of the most able and best-trained soldiers in the

world. It reportedly extended its range to 50 square miles, and Superintendent McClary asked for public assistance: "We need sightings of this animal reported to us immediately. Time is running out. The undergrowth is growing fast and soon he will be able to find all the cover he needs. This is a very cunning animal, which keeps close to the hedgerows and very rarely crosses open countryside."

By late June, the Beast's kills had reached 86, but by early July the kill rate had dropped considerably. There was speculation that it had taken to hunting deer and rabbits. At press time, no further reports had been received. Perhaps the Beast had retreated to the overgrowth. Perhaps it will strike again in the autumn. Perhaps it will never be heard from again, and will become a memory, even a legend. Or maybe even a new Royal Marine mascot. □

## Important Notice

The newsletters and the 1983 issue of the journal are running behind schedule. The Winter Newsletter will probably be mailed in January, and the 1983 journal in February. Members are also reminded that the Society's "year" runs from March 1 to February 28/29 of the following year. Consequently, membership renewals for 1984 will not be due until March. To avoid extra administrative work by the Society, members are requested 1) not to renew their memberships until they receive the renewal notice/return envelope contained inside the plastic journal mailers, and 2) to then renew without delay. Membership for 1984 remains at US\$25, which includes the receipt of four newsletters and one journal.

## News & Notes

News and Notes is a new column which will appear regularly in the Newsletter. It will contain brief news capsules of cryptozoological interest. The Editor requests members to submit items for possible use in the column.

White Elephant Story: Indonesian officials reported the existence of a community of "white elephants" in March of this year. A possible subspecies of the Indian (Asian) Elephant, *Elephas indicus*, a herd of them reportedly was observed by villagers of Aceh Province, in North Sumatra. Such elephants are known on the Asian subcontinent, but are not officially known in the Indonesian archipelago.

Emil Salim, Indonesia's Minister of Population and En-

vironment, stated: "This is a very rare species and we must arrange for the white elephants to be put in a wildlife park... I believe the villagers' reports, since I have heard similar reports before, and a good indication of the white elephant's existence is that he is the emblem of the regional military command... It is a pity that no one has been able to take a picture of the white elephants..."

Minister Salim had planned to relocate the elephants to the Leuser National Park, about 50 miles from the area of the reports, but by the time the relocation efforts got underway, the elephants had disappeared. "We know they're there..." an empty-handed official was quoted as saying.

The Kouprey Lives. Believed by many to have become extinct in its native habitat of

Laos, Thailand, Cambodia, and Vietnam, the kouprey, *Bos sauveli*, was reliably reported alive in late 1982. About 15 years ago, it was believed that this species of wild oxen was surviving precariously in two areas of Cambodia and in southern Vietnam. An international conservation program to save the estimated 100 kouprey in Cambodia was canceled in 1970 because of military hostilities, and it is thought that the remaining population was slaughtered for food by the new controlling military authorities. The last small herd in Thailand was reported soon after World War II, although an unconfirmed report of a herd of 20 surfaced in 1975.

Now, Boonsong Lekagul, a Thai mammalogist, reports that one adult male, two adult females, and two calves were observed in Sisaket Province, the same location as the 1975 re-



port, which is in northeast Thailand near Cambodia. The research team which found the kouprey believed that more may be living and breeding in the nearby forests.

The kouprey is one of the largest--and most primitive--of living cattle, with affinities to extinct Pleistocene forms. Thai authorities hope to capture some of the surviving kouprey for controlled breeding. There are no koupreys at all in captivity at this time.

Creepy Numbers. A new estimate has been made of the number of arthropod species (insects and their relatives) existing in the world. So far, only about 1.3 million arthropod species (insects, spiders, crustaceans, etc.) have been scientifically described, but it was thought that the total number could well reach 3 million species. Writing in *New Scientist*, Vol.97:1346 (February 24, 1983), T. L. Erwin and colleagues at the Smithsonian Institution now state that 10 times that many--30 million arthropod species--may exist.

This new estimate is based on beetle-collecting results in rain forests in Brazil, Panama, and Peru, which produced far more new species than had been anticipated. (See Bernard Heuvelmans' forthcoming article, "How Many Animal Species Remain

To Be Discovered?" in *Cryptozoology*, Vol. 2).

Slowly But Surely. A terrestrial turtle, *Heosemys silvatica*, has been known only by two museum specimens collected in 1911 in a forest in southwest India. The specimens were obtained from Kadar tribesmen, still a hunter-gatherer, semi-nomadic group. Although another search in 1912 was unsuccessful, a new 1982 survey in the same area of the Anaimalai Hills located Kadar tribesmen who were acquainted with two kinds of turtles. After a two-day search, the team located a *silvatica*, the first live specimen ever seen by anyone except the Kaders.

In an article in *Oryx*, Vol. 17, July, 1983, B. Groombridge, E. O. Moll, and J. Vijaya state that "the Kaders, of course, had been as familiar with the species since its scientific recognition [in 1911] as they had presumably been for centuries earlier." About five inches in length, *Heosemys silvatica* is a small terrestrial example of an almost entirely aquatic family. Steps for its future conservation are being taken.

Trashy Sea Serpent. Following the 1982 excitement surrounding the videotaping of an unknown marine animal known locally as Chessie (for Chesapeake Bay Monster), 1983 has been a

slow year for "sea serpents."

The only 1983 report of Chessie to reach the Editor concerns an event which occurred on the Potomac River on the night of April 26 (technically 3 a.m. April 27). An Alexandria boat owner was alerted by his son, who, together with his girlfriend, had spotted a large swimming animal. The father then turned his boat's spotlight on the animal as it swam "less than 100 feet offshore." It reportedly swam past the Prince Street Dock, and was visible in the lights cast by night workmen repairing the Woodrow Wilson Bridge (none of the workmen reported seeing it).

The boat owner, who insists on anonymity for fear that publicity could negatively affect his charter boat business, said the animal was "weird." He stated: "It was at least 30 feet long. It had a smooth, glistening body. We could see it in the dark. Its head was bobbing up and down." The April 30 issue of the *Alexandria Gazette* stated that the boat owner, who had navigated the Potomac for years, had reported his observation to the District of Columbia Harbor Police. Officer D. L. Keller, confirming that this was the first such report his department had received, was quoted as saying: "More than likely what they saw was trash." □

## Cryptoletters

The Editor welcomes letters from readers on any topic related to cryptozoology, but reserves the right to shorten them or to make slight changes to improve style and clarity, but not meaning. Specific commentaries or critiques related to items published in *Cryptozoology* should be sent double-spaced for publication in that journal.

Dear Editor:

John E. Wall's suggestion of the word "cryptid" (Summer, 1983 *Newsletter*) to replace the word "monster" is well-received, at least by me. Associates of mine and I wish to submit the following new words for consideration:

Cryptozoid--an unknown animal

Cryptophytid--an unknown plant

The universal acceptance

and adoption of a word that designates a living thing yet to be discovered, named, and studied would be a worthy goal for the Society.

Daniel J. Lyons  
North Carolina State Museum  
of Natural History  
Raleigh, North Carolina

Dear Editor:

This concerns your response

to my letter in the Summer, 1983 Newsletter. You and King reported in *Current Anthropology*: "About 61 percent indicated that scientists either certainly or probably should undertake Big-foot research." Forty-six percent of the same sample of physical and paleoanthropologists knew of Napier's 1972 book, but hadn't read it by 1978. Another 33 present claimed to have read the book. A comparison between the first datum and the response to Krantz reported earlier in the Newsletter is valid, I believe, and telling.

I look forward to the day when the Society affirms by its operating and editorial policies "that laymen have done most of the work" and will continue to.

[The following is taken from another letter sent to the ISC Board of Directors by Mr. Strassenburgh.]

It seems to me that, if useful Sasquatch research is to be encouraged and supported by the recently formed Society, the Board of Directors must come to grips with the anti-intellectual tack of anthropology toward Sasquatch. How exactly, but at face value, is Halpin's (1980) remark that real wild folk are "unthinkable" to be taken? What of the one-in-four disparity between what anthropologists told the Editor in response to his survey, and what they told Krantz in response to documentation of the freshest, clearest Sasquatch footprints of all those ever collected?

I have done my best to provoke anthropological thought and discussion, to little if any avail. I have therefore reconciled myself to the fact that three out of four anthropologists are not thinking about Sasquatch, and that the remainder who wish "to be kept informed" show not positive curiosity, but passive interest at best!

I respectfully submit that the Board must take positive steps to ensure that the demonstrated anthropological disinclination to think about, study, and frankly discuss Sasquatch does not interfere or bias a Society policy in support of clear thought, serious study, and free discussions of the subject.

Gordon Strassenburgh  
Moss Landing, California

Apparently, the "larger number who professed interest in the subject" to which Mr. Strassenburgh referred in the previous newsletter is the 61 percent who supported Sasquatch research. The "disparity" which he sees between this 61 percent and the 33 percent who had read Napier's book (or the 79 percent who had either read it or were aware of it) is actually to anthropologists' credit. Despite their personal opinions (in this case negative) concerning a controversial topic, scientists generally tend to bend over backwards to be fair--so long as somebody else does the work (they are only human!). Thus, the largest "disparity" is actually between the almost negligible 13 percent who accepted the existence of Sasquatch, and the impressive 61 percent who thought the matter should be investigated by scientists.

Does that mean that 61 percent of anthropologists should accept Dr. Krantz' Walla Walla evidence? Certainly not. Our survey indicated that less than one in eight (13 percent) accepted Sasquatch, and few will be swayed by any new evidence that does not involve "a body." This is about the same low positive response rate that Dr. Krantz received. In any event, comparing survey results is a tricky business, as every social scientist knows. Dr. Krantz did not conduct a survey; thus, a comparison of the two events has

no real scientific validity.

Despite Mr. Strassenburgh's beliefs, the Editor does not distinguish between laymen and scientists during the discharge of his editorial duties, only between good scholarship and poor scholarship. Indeed, the Editor would welcome publishable material from the lay Sasquatch researchers (see his response to the next letter).

With references to the second letter, the Editor continues to suggest that the best solution to Mr. Strassenburgh's problem (and that of other Sasquatch researchers who feel that they have been treated unfairly by anthropologists) is to publish his data in the Society's journal, which is read by a growing number of anthropologists. The purpose of the Society is not to "come to grips with the anti-intellectual tack of anthropology" or any other discipline. It is to provide a forum for publication and discussion of evidence of unknown but possibly real animals. Its purposes are scientific, not political.

-- Editor

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Dear Editor:

You alleged academics seem to think you know it all. According to oceanographer Paul LeBlond, it takes years (if not half a lifetime) to know something. All the literary works from the ISC and elsewhere that conform to literary excellence or whatever really don't conform to hard-nosed objective science that deals with cold facts. It is my sole contention that the ISC and myself and others have been blowing bubbles for a year. Too much talk and not enough extensive fieldwork. You see, a Sasquatch will never be found by putting out damn learned articles; it all boils down to beating the bush.



I was recently informed that the ISC held a conference/meeting/whatever. Understood that Bernard Heuvelmans was in the States. I sure as hell would like to know if his so-called "Bozo" (the Iceman) is so genuinely a corpse of a hitherto unknown species, why in the flock isn't he looking all over the damn country trying to secure that baby? If Heuvelmans is so convinced that the Iceman is the "real thing," think of the implications if someone got hold of the thing and "broke the ice."

In my forthcoming book, *The Big Footnotes*, there are two bibliographical entries which I suggest that all ISC personnel browse. One entry deals with journalistic irresponsibility, the other science versus common sense. Science, my dear colleagues, is merely a paranoid way of looking at things, a slow and steady process in which the investigator follows the evidence wherever it leads. Many on the ISC Board of Directors have what I believe to be "cookie cutter" educations.

Remember Dr. Vannevar Bush? He said in 1945 that a rocket equipped with a nuclear warhead should be "left out of our thinking." Too damn bad for him. Such rockets do indeed exist. Perhaps he should be left out of our thinking. Likewise for the Sasquatch. Remember, poor fellas, you said a long time ago that ole Biggie [Sasquatch] was a figment of the housewives' imagination? Now look at how many real scientists and alleged scientists are looking into this problem. The Bigfoot researchers don't need you people. Could it be that you folks should listen to us?

Let's look at the ISC conventions. What's going to happen 16 years down the road? Gonna still be with it? Having illustrious conversations with other scientists exchanging hot air? Building egos/whatever?

The Sasquatch is going to be a mystery to many people from all walks of life if we continue conversing at conventions. Why don't we or you hold conventions out in the bush? How many people would attend? It would certainly separate the men from the boys.

Anyway, if there is a lesson to be learned, it might be something about like this: Stick with the horse sense and forget the horse----

Danny Perez  
Nowalk, California

Much of the text from the above letter from a Sasquatch researcher has been deleted by the Editor as being irrelevant. Also, many abusive comments or words have been omitted, and some grammatical and spelling corrections have been made.

The Editor cannot speak for Dr. LeBlond or Dr. Heuvelmans, but he is unsure in what way the ISC publications "don't conform to hard-nosed objective science that deals with cold facts." He also does not agree with the statement (which seems to contradict the one above) that science "is merely a paranoid way of looking at things." Incidentally, the Editor is preparing a review article on the Iceman for a future issue of the Newsletter.

The ISC has not sponsored conventions, only a membership meeting in New York City, where ISC members were able to meet and get to know one another. The Editor sees no purpose in holding conventions in the bush, but he, for one, is certainly not averse to going into the bush to seek further evidence of unknown animals.

Mr. Perez states that "the Bigfoot researchers don't need you people [the scientists]." It was the impression held by the founders of the Society

that, for decades, the Bigfoot researchers had been unsuccessfully trying to get scientists to listen to them and look at their evidence. It was thought that the Bigfoot researchers had perhaps not been treated fairly by the scientific community, and that the ISC could in part rectify that by providing a forum for the Bigfoot researchers to publish their evidence in a format the scientists could not reject outright: a scholarly journal conforming to certain scientific standards.

The Editor has been awaiting the submission of articles or field reports from Sasquatch researchers for almost two years. All that has arrived are a number of abusive communications from various quarters.

The scientific community is now waiting to see in published form the much-discussed evidence the Sasquatch researchers say they have documented for 30 years, and which they claim has been ignored by scientists.

-- Editor

#### ISC PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE

Past issues of both *The ISC Newsletter* and the journal *Cryptozology* are available to both members and non-members. Newsletter prices to individuals are \$2.50 each (\$3.50 to institutions, corporations, and libraries). Journal prices to individuals are \$15 each (\$21 to institutions, corporations, and libraries). Prices include postage good for all orders from all countries.

All past ISC publications are still available, as follows:

#### Newsletter:

Vol. 1, Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4 (1982)  
Vol. 2, Nos. 1, 2 (1983)

#### Journal:

Vol. 1 (1982)

## Cryptoquote

"Toward the end of 1910, Carl Hagenbeck felt sufficiently certain that the misnamed pygmy hippos were still alive somewhere in the interior of Liberia to assign the best man of his staff of animal collectors, Hans Schomburgk, to find one and to bring it back alive. This was by no means an easy assignment, and Schomburgk at first experienced the fate of all men who try to do something no one else has done before: he was laughed at. All the possible variations were rung on the famous phrase, 'There ain't no such animal.' The Negro officials told him that the animal was extinct, if indeed it had ever lived in the land. The white employees of shipping agencies patronizingly suggested that he go elephant hunting instead; it was safer, and more likely to bring results. A friendly fat Dutchman advised that he stay with him for a few months and then return with the report (which would be true) that the animal did not exist. All in vain; Hans Schomburgk continued with his expedition....

"Schomburgk's first discovery during this trip concerned the real hippopotamus. It existed in Liberia, despite all assertions to the contrary in the books... Finally, Schomburgk arrived in a district where *nigbve* was not regarded as

a superstition. The natives knew it well and delivered a warning speech about it...

"Schomburgk finally acquired all the help he wanted. And on June 13, 1911, he--the first white man to do so--saw a pygmy hippo alive in its natural surroundings. He was about 20 feet from it, but saw no possibility of catching it. He could easily have shot it but did not dare to....

"That was the end of the *nigbve* hunt for that year. The rainy season set in anew; the rivers became dangerous; it was too late. Schomburgk returned to Monrovia, the capital of Liberia, and told about actually seeing a live dwarf hippo. No one believed him; one does not see a mythical, or even an extinct, animal roaming around alive. Fortunately, Schomburgk had had plenty of opportunity to develop armor against such non-belief. Calm, empty-handed, but with definite knowledge, he returned to Hamburg and to Hagenbeck. On Christmas Eve, 1912, he sailed for Liberia on his second expedition....

"On February 28, 1913, he shot his first pygmy hippo."

Willy Ley

(From: *The Lungfish, the Dodo, and the Unicorn*. Viking Press, New York, 1948).

## Wood's Animal Facts

"The largest living terrestrial animal is the African bush or savannah elephant (*Loxodonta africana*). The average adult bull stands at 10 feet, 6 inches (3.2 meters) at the shoulder... The largest accurately measured African bush elephant on record, and the largest recorded land mammal of modern times, was an enormous bull shot by E. M. Nielsen, an American big-game hunter, 25 miles (40 kilometers) northeast of Mucusso, South Angola, on November 7, 1974. This giant measured 13 feet, 8 inches (4.17 meters) in a projected line from the highest point of the shoulder to the base of the extended forefoot while lying on its side, thus indicating that its standing height must have been about 13 feet (4 meters)... Other measurements included: overall length, 35 feet (10.7 meters) (tip of extended trunk to end of extended tail); forefoot circumference, 5 feet, 11 inches (1.8 meters)."

Abstracted from:

*The Guinness Book of Animal Facts and Feats*, by Gerald L. Wood. Guinness Superlatives, Ltd., Enfield, U.K., Third Edition, 1982.



### The ISC Newsletter

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